



### **Statement from Natrona County on Proposal for WMC to Join Banner Health**

The leaders of Natrona County are committed to keeping our area a great place to live, work and raise a family. We know how special our community is and want to see our area be the best that it can be. We are committed to ensuring that Natrona County is as successful as possible – not just today or five years from today, but for generations down the road.

Local healthcare plays a critical role in ensuring a strong future, and the current and future healthcare needs of our community are an important priority. For that reason, our vision is to help grow access to high-quality care close to home right here in Natrona County, and in doing so improve the health of our communities and secure our healthcare future.

The County's role has been to stay apprised of the situation and aware of appropriate ongoing discussions as Wyoming Medical Center has moved through its exploration process and the due diligence period with Banner Health. As things have moved along, two things have become clear to the Board of County Commissioners.

First, the prospect of WMC joining Banner Health is a special opportunity that we believe can drive healthcare forward for our community, helping ultimately to make local healthcare even better for those we serve today and for generations that follow. We believe Banner is the right partner for WMC and for Natrona County.

Second, the County has a key role in the prospect of WMC joining Banner because today the County owns the land, buildings and equipment associated with WMC. This puts us in a position to help secure the best healthcare future possible for those we serve. A separate agreement with the County for Banner to purchase the land, buildings and equipment for \$157 million will allow the County to provide substantial one-time support to the WMC foundation, secure more than \$120 million that can be invested for the County's future and eliminate approximately \$50 million in debt. Banner's purchase of the land, buildings and equipment associated with WMC from the County will make all of this possible.

We believe the benefits of WMC becoming part of Banner Health are clear. They include:

- Over the course of 10 years, Banner would invest a minimum of \$100 million in WMC and its facilities, technology, programs, people and operations to protect and expand access to high-quality local care.
- One of the largest independent, nonprofit foundations in Wyoming, receiving more than \$220 million in initial projected funding to focus on healthcare in Natrona County, and providing significant support specifically to WMC on an annual basis to support its facilities and technology, as well as other philanthropic efforts. A separate, independent foundation board with representation from community leaders in Natrona County will receive regular reports from Banner to ensure commitments by Banner are adhered to and fulfilled.

In addition, Banner will also commit to:

- Preserving and furthering WMC's nonprofit mission and working to improve the health of Wyoming residents
- Ensuring WMC's participation in Medicare and Medicaid and continuing access to the 24/7 emergency care, trauma services, women's care and labor and delivery services WMC offers
- Caring for all patients, regardless of ability to pay, and continuing to provide involuntary care, prisoner care and serving the most vulnerable members of the community in accordance with Banner's financial assistance policies
- Expanding and growing healthcare access and advancing medical care in our community, region and state
- Keeping and expanding the delivery of medical services in rural areas here in Wyoming
- Developing an integrated network of care with Banner's three additional Wyoming hospitals
- Bringing together the best services and business practices of both organizations
- Sustaining the financial and operational strength and stability of WMC, creating significant growth opportunities

While the benefits are many, it is important for the community to understand that many critical things will remain the same as they are today. Most importantly, WMC will continue to provide access to the wide range of quality healthcare services offered today, including WMC's regional trauma designation, and patients will continue to be able to receive care from the same physicians they do today. In addition, Wyoming Medical Center will keep its name, and co-brand with Banner at some point in the future.

We take our responsibility to protect our community seriously. As part of the proposal, the County will preserve the ability to legally enforce Banner's commitments to maintain an acute care hospital satisfying certain basic hospital criteria and to continue to provide care for prisoners and individuals subject to involuntary hospitalization in the proposed post-closing agreement between Banner and the County. This gives the County the important ability to ensure these commitments are met in full.

The Board of County Commissioners is committed to listening to the community on this important topic while sharing information and keeping the community informed. The County will host two community forums over the coming weeks where representatives from WMC and Banner Health, as well as the County, will share additional details about what this means for Natrona County and listen to any questions or concerns the community may have.

- July 22 and July 28 at 5:30 p.m.
- Natrona County Courthouse, 200 North Center St., Casper, WY.
- Through an abundance of caution, and to keep our healthcare providers and community residents safe, forum attendees are asked to adhere to WMC guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Meeting attendees will be required to wear a mask and adhere to social distancing guidelines. A mask will be provided if needed.
- Comments may also be submitted via the County website.

We remain committed to helping our region be the best that it can be, including securing the future of healthcare. To learn more, see a list of frequently asked questions or sign up for the latest news, please visit [WMCforward.org](http://WMCforward.org).

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